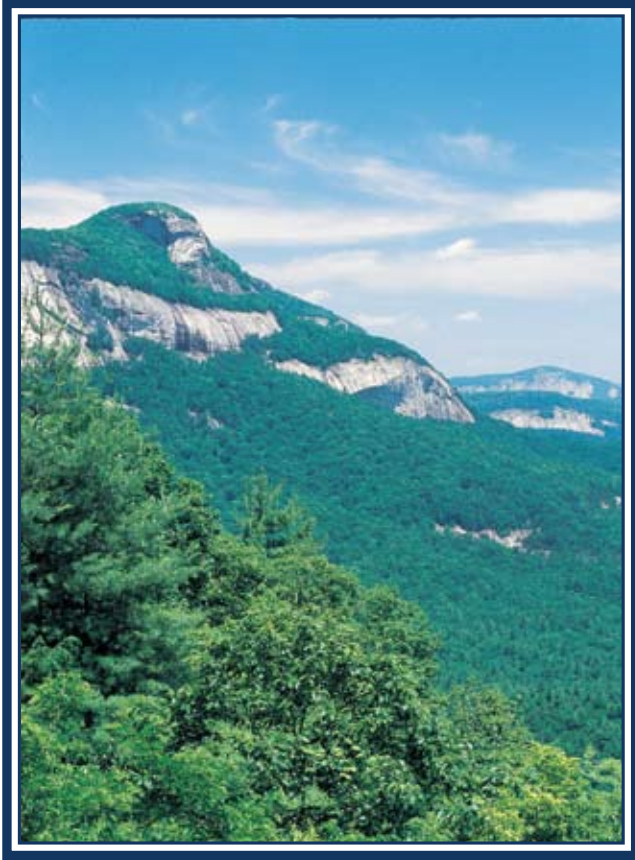


WHITESIDE MOUNTAIN

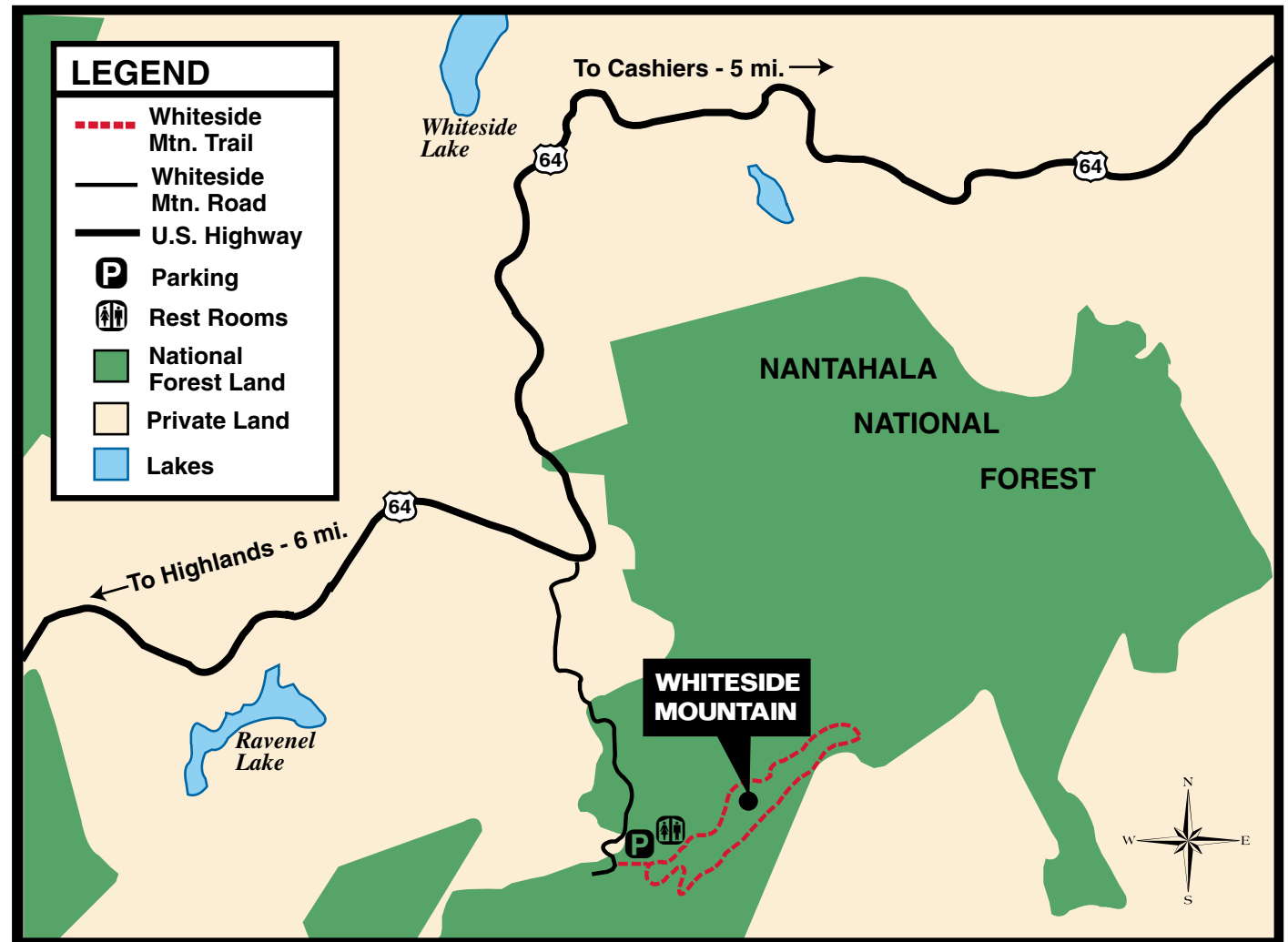
landmark to discover



Discover a variety of wildflowers and million-year-old rock cliffs that reach to 4930 feet



U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Southern Region



Directions

FROM ASHEVILLE: Take I-26E to exit 40 (Asheville Airport). Turn right on NC 280W. NC 280W becomes U.S. 64W in Pisgah Forest. Stay on U.S. 64W through Cashiers, and go another five miles. Turn left on SR 1600 at Whiteside Mountain sign. Turn left into Whiteside Mountain entrance.

Trip mileage: 53

FROM WALHALLA, SC: Take SC 28N for about eight miles. Bear right on SC 107, and drive past Oconee State Park. Continue to the traffic light in Cashiers. Turn left on U.S. 64W, and follow above directions. **Trip mileage: 36**

For information & maps

NANTAHALA RANGER DISTRICT:

90 Sloan Roan
Franklin, NC 28734
(828) 524-6441

NATIONAL FORESTS IN NC WEB SITE:

www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc

HIKING MAPS: National Geographic Nantahala & Cullasaja Gorges; USGS Highlands quad.

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R8-RG 246

Slightly Revised October 2008



Enjoy the Experience

A landmark along the Eastern Continental Divide, Whiteside Mountain rises to an elevation of 4,930 feet. The mountain's cliffs look like sheets of ice draped across the mountain. This magnificent rock is about 390 to 460 million years old.

Attractions: A 2-mile loop trail climbs above sheer 750-foot high cliffs and offers outstanding views to the east, south, and west. Whiteside Mountain Trail is rated "more difficult" because of its steepness. Along your journey to the top, you can spot a variety of wildflowers—including false Solomons-seal, white snakeroot, dwarf dandelion, speckled wood-lily, and wood betony.

Location: Whiteside Mountain is located south of U.S. 64 between Highlands and Cashiers.

Jewel of the Appalachians

Millions of years ago and before North America existed, Whiteside Mountain began as a huge mass of molten rock deep in the earth. The rock cooled, and then heat, pressure, and uplifting metamorphosed the granite rock into a granitic gneiss (pronounced "nice"). In the following ages, the overlying material eroded to expose this majestic rock.

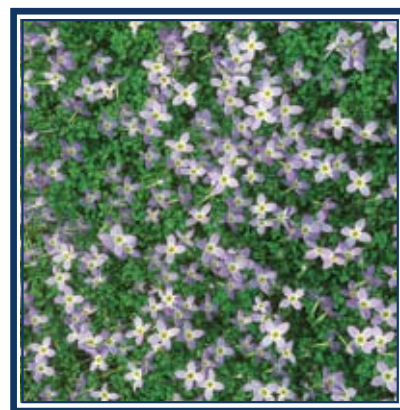
You can best see the solid rock foundation of this mountain on the south-facing cliffs, where wind and drier conditions limit plant growth. White streaks of quartz and feldspar line the face.

Wildflowers flourish on mountain cliffs

A variety of wildflowers and different plant communities grow on Whiteside Mountain. The mountain's variety of soils, light, and moisture create a mixture of plant habitats.

The north-facing, moist slopes have a northern hardwood forest, where you can walk under yellow and black birch, eastern hemlock, and Fraser magnolia trees. Scattered in the forest's understory are witch-hazel, minnie-bush, and wild raisinshrubs. On the forest floor, you can discover speckled wood-lily, white snakeroot, Curtis's goldenrod, and bluets. At the summit is an old-growth northern red oak forest. Notice the red oaks' figures. Strong winds and ice storms shaped the trees into twisted forms. Growing in this forest's understory, you will find serviceberry, false Solomons-seal, wild sarsaparilla, whorled aster, white wood aster, and wood betony.

Across the southern slopes is a heath bald shrub community. These clusters of shrubs include Carolina rhododendron and two highly fragrant plants, smooth and clammy azalea.



bluets



wood betony

A fragile rock-face community blankets the southern mountain face. Mats of spikemoss and some wildflowers—pale corydalis, dwarf dandelion, gray beard-tongue, and graniticdome-goldenrod carpet this dry rocky face.

The home of falcons

During the spring and summer, you may see peregrine falcons flying above or sitting on rock outcrops. Through the endangered species program, the falcon was reintroduced in 1985 to Whiteside Mountain, part of the bird's native range.

From January until summer, peregrines—one of the world's fastest and most beautiful birds—return annually to nest on rock ledges. Because peregrines are nervous parents, climbing routes near nesting sites are closed during nesting. Please see maps on display at parking lot for current closures.



peregrine falcon

Whiteside history

Prior to the Seventh Cherokee Treaty of 1819, the mountain was part of the Cherokee Nation.

During the mid-1800s, the State of North Carolina issued more than 20 separate land grants to early settlers along the eastern slope of Whiteside. Following the Civil War, Macon County Land Company purchased the rest of Whiteside Mountain for about 7 cents an acre.

In the early 1900s, the land became part of the enormous estate of the Ravenel family, who summered in the Highlands area.

Later, a private corporation bought the land and used it as a tourist attraction. Shuttle buses carried people to the mountain's peak over a road built for this purpose.

In 1947, the mountain was purchased for its timber and logged. The U.S. Forest Service then acquired the land in 1970s, and it became part of the Nantahala National Forest.